



MINNEGAZETTE

Winter 2006



67 paces from 1 to 2
107 " " 1 to 3

Looking west on 4th St
107 paces east of Nemadji
River Bridge.

9:30 A.M. 11/1/24

E.T.M.



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CIRCULATION

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The Minnesota Streetcar Museum operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and the Excelsior Streetcar Line in Excelsior.

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CORRECTIONS AND NEW INFO

Last issue's inside front cover was incorrectly captioned as showing the State Fair streetcar yard. Look closely at the destination signs in the center blow-up. They all say "Speedway". This is the storage yard for the Twin City Motor Speedway, an ill-fated enterprise that lasted only from 1915 to 1917. TCRT built a mile of double track streetcar line around the north and west edges of the Veterans Administration hospital to reach the speedway site, now part of the north end of Twin Cities International Airport. Russ Olson found the following history of the Speedway.

The Twin City Motor Speedway was located on 160 acres bounded by 34th Avenue S., 46th Avenue S., 60th Street and 66th Street. Its concrete oval track was two miles around and 87 feet wide. Here was a grandstand for 30,000 persons, plus bleachers for 30,000, 19 garages, one timing building, one huge scoreboard, pit area and three reinforced concrete underpass tunnels to the infield.

The first and only major event was Labor Day 1915. The track, rough to begin with, had beaten the cars to pieces. The concrete, not steel reinforced in some areas, and subject to Minnesota climate, began to heave and break up. It was charged that substandard materials and construction methods had been used by the contractors. The Speedway saw only two races in 1916 and one on July 4, 1917. Then it closed. Streetcar service operated September 4, 1915 to July 7, 1917.

Bankruptcy proceedings started in 1916 against the Speedway Corporation. During 1917 the grandstands and other structures were dismantled and the lumber sold to pay bills. In 1918, the property went through the first in a series of sales that converted it for aviation purposes. In 1919 the Security Aircraft Co. built one hangar at 40th Avenue S. and 62nd Street for the first U. S. Airmail service. In 1921 the Air National Guard built three hangars. It

came to be known as Speedway Field or Twin Cities Airport. In 1923 it was renamed Wold-Chamberlain Twin City Airport.

The removal of the race track itself was performed during 1930-31. The FAA took over administration of the control tower in 1942. The Metropolitan Airports Commission was created July 6, 1943. By August 1944 Wold-Chamberlain Field had been turned over to the MAC.

Rod Eaton writes, "I remember visiting Santa Claus Town as a child. After seeing the photos in the MinneGazette, I stopped at the Anoka History Center and learned a bit about the place. Santa Claus Town opened in 1953. It was located about two miles west of Anoka on Highway 10. In the aerial photo of the park, Highway 10 runs along the top edge. The photo is from the North side of the highway; Anoka is two miles to the left, while Elk River is about 10 miles to the right. I'm quite sure the building seen in the upper left corner of the photo still exists on that site.

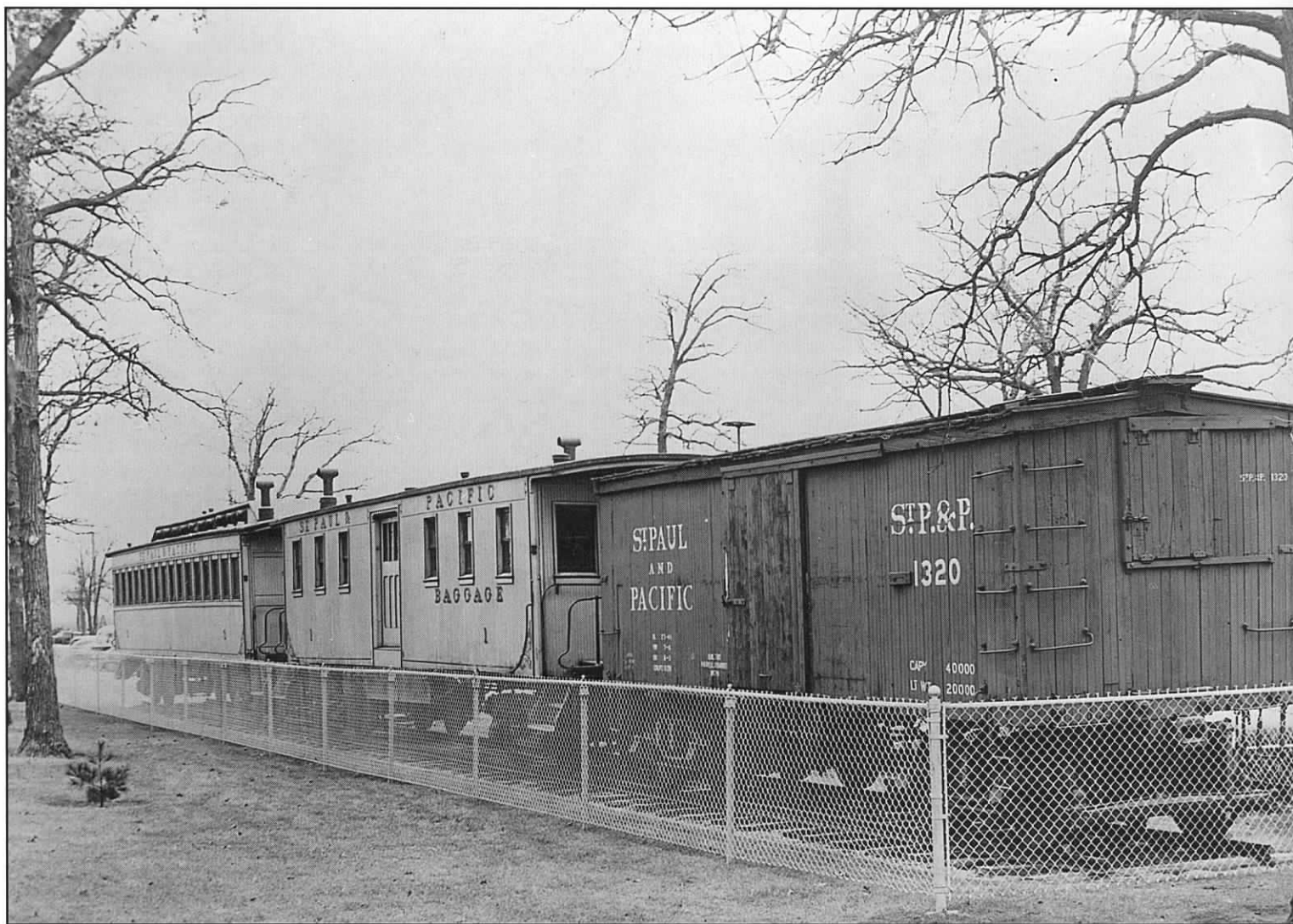
According to the History Center's files, a mechanical engineer from the Iron Range moved to Anoka and built the park. The little train in the lower photo started out in an underground mine in Hibbing. It ran on a 48 volt electrical system which reportedly "ran all day on a charge" and could carry as many as 72 children on "the ride of their life." 1,800 feet of track circled the park.

Although Santa Claus was the star, there were many fairy tale and biblical characters featured throughout the park. There was a cow jumping the moon, Noah's Ark, and Jonah in the mouth of a whale. There were airplane, rocket, boat, and car rides, a wishing well, a witch house, and a refreshment stand in the shape of a giant tree stump. The big treasure chest visible in the aerial photo was a souvenir shop. In Santa's workshop, mechanical elves made toys.

Santa Claus Town closed sometime in the early 1960s. Interestingly, some of the large cement figures, like the Santa

Front cover: The Minneapolis end of the Inter Campus line originally ended at a wye. At some unknown date in the 1920s, a loop was substituted. Well-dressed students fill the sidewalk along 15th Avenue SE as a car sits on the wye. The campus was penetrated and surrounded by rail lines. For more, turn to page 6. University of Minnesota Archives collection.

Inside front cover: The Northern Pacific's Superior ore dock was approached on a long wood trestle. The deck girder span crossed over East 4th Street and the Allouez streetcar line. Streetcars crossed this bridge over the Nemadji River from 1907 to 1928. In 1924 it was judged too weak to carry standard streetcars, so lightweights and Birneys were substituted. Streetcars stopped using the bridge in 1928, when the line was detoured two blocks east onto 2nd Street until abandonment in 1935. North East Minnesota Historical Center collection.



The Minnegazette featured St. Paul & Pacific boxcar #1320, now displayed at the Mill City Museum in Minneapolis. Where did they get it? The car was preserved by the Great Northern. This photo shows it on display outside the St. Cloud car shops about 1952, in the company of the coaches that accompanied the William Crooks on publicity tours. All three cars and the Crooks went to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth, and #1320 was sold to Mill City. Dick Stoner collection.

and Snowman, were saved and moved to various locations around the area. In about 1989, a large parrot figure, which originally concealed a loudspeaker through which a hidden attendant could talk to kids, became the most talked about piece at a Minneapolis College of Art and Design show."

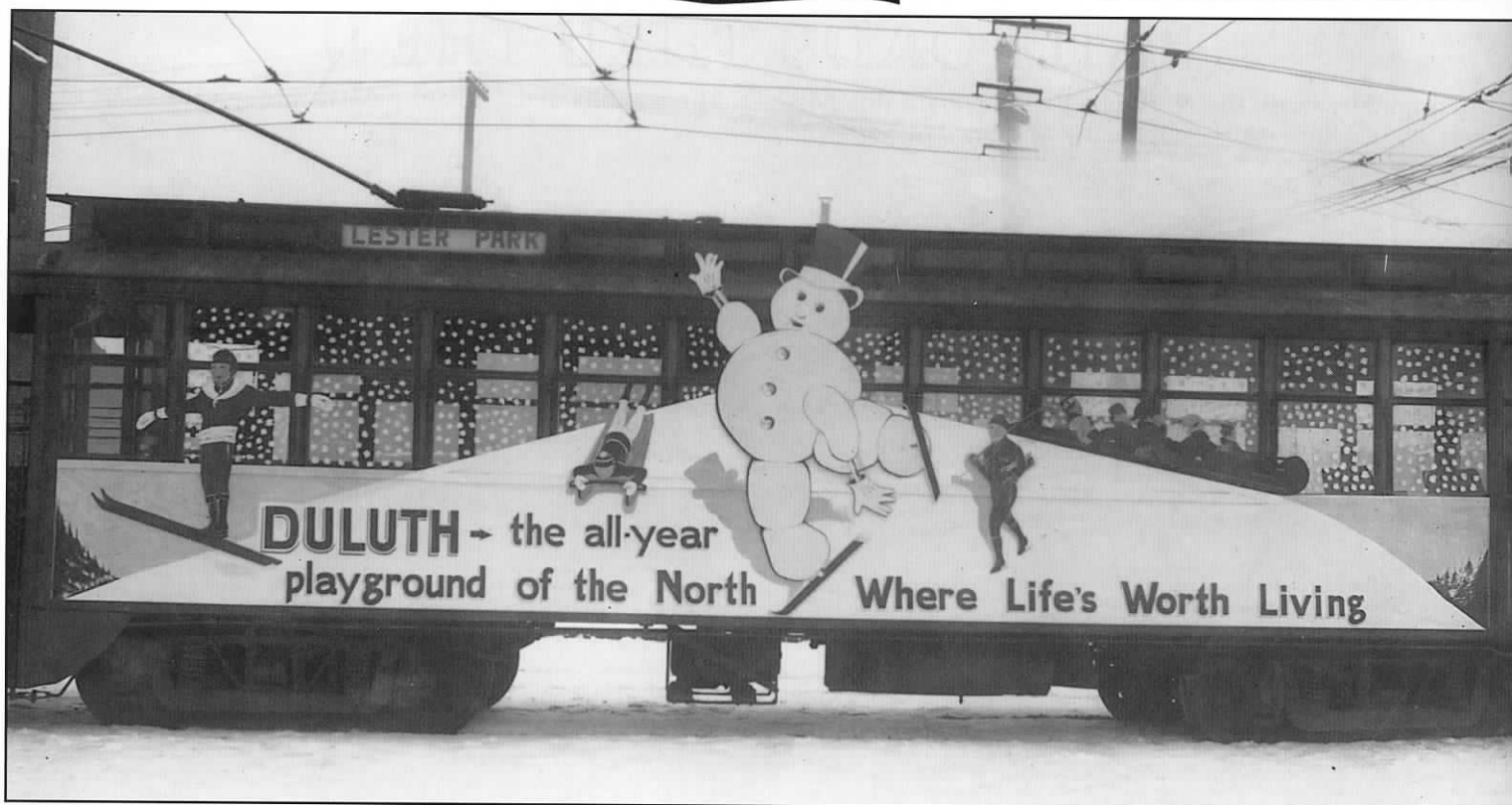
Remember the mystery tower that appeared in the Como Park streetcar photos in the Summer 2005 issue? Gary Lovegren has identified it as the St. Paul City Workhouse. It was located in the area south of Horton Avenue and west of Lexington Avenue, the current site of the public swimming pool.



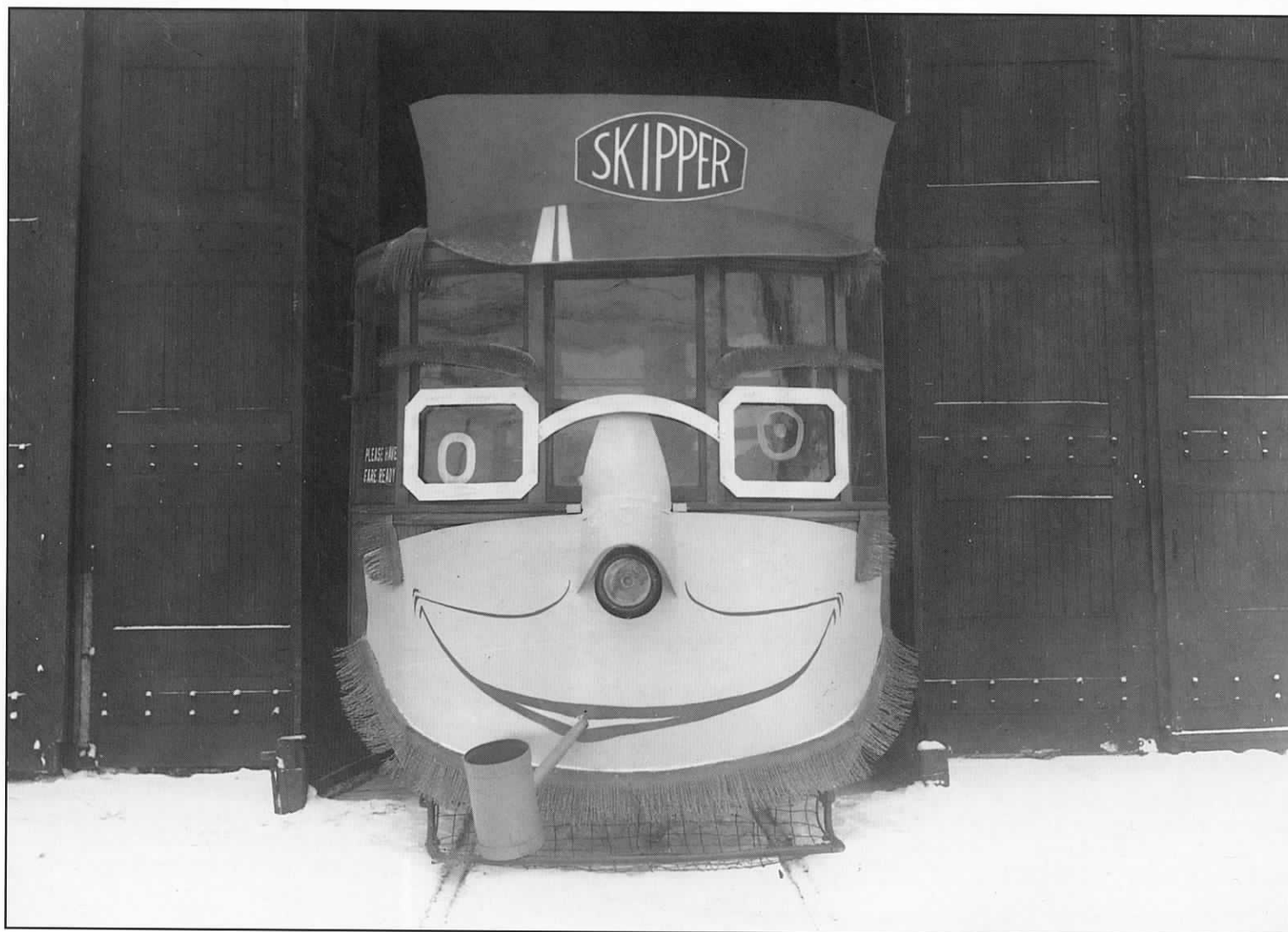
GEORGE ISAACS 1922-2006

One of MTM's founders, George Isaacs, has passed away from cancer. A life long streetcar fan, he was involved in every aspect of the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line, heading up track crews, coordinating carbarn construction and participating in the restoration of all five operating streetcars, plus Winona #10. He headed up the nine-year PCC restoration, as well as the first TEA21 project. He was MTM President in the 1970s and served as a car attendant at Osceola. He was in the first group to receive the MTM Lifetime Achievement Award.

He was instrumental in laying the foundation for light rail transit, and served on the Hiawatha Line vehicle selection committee. He loved nothing better than riding the LRT and meeting the passengers.



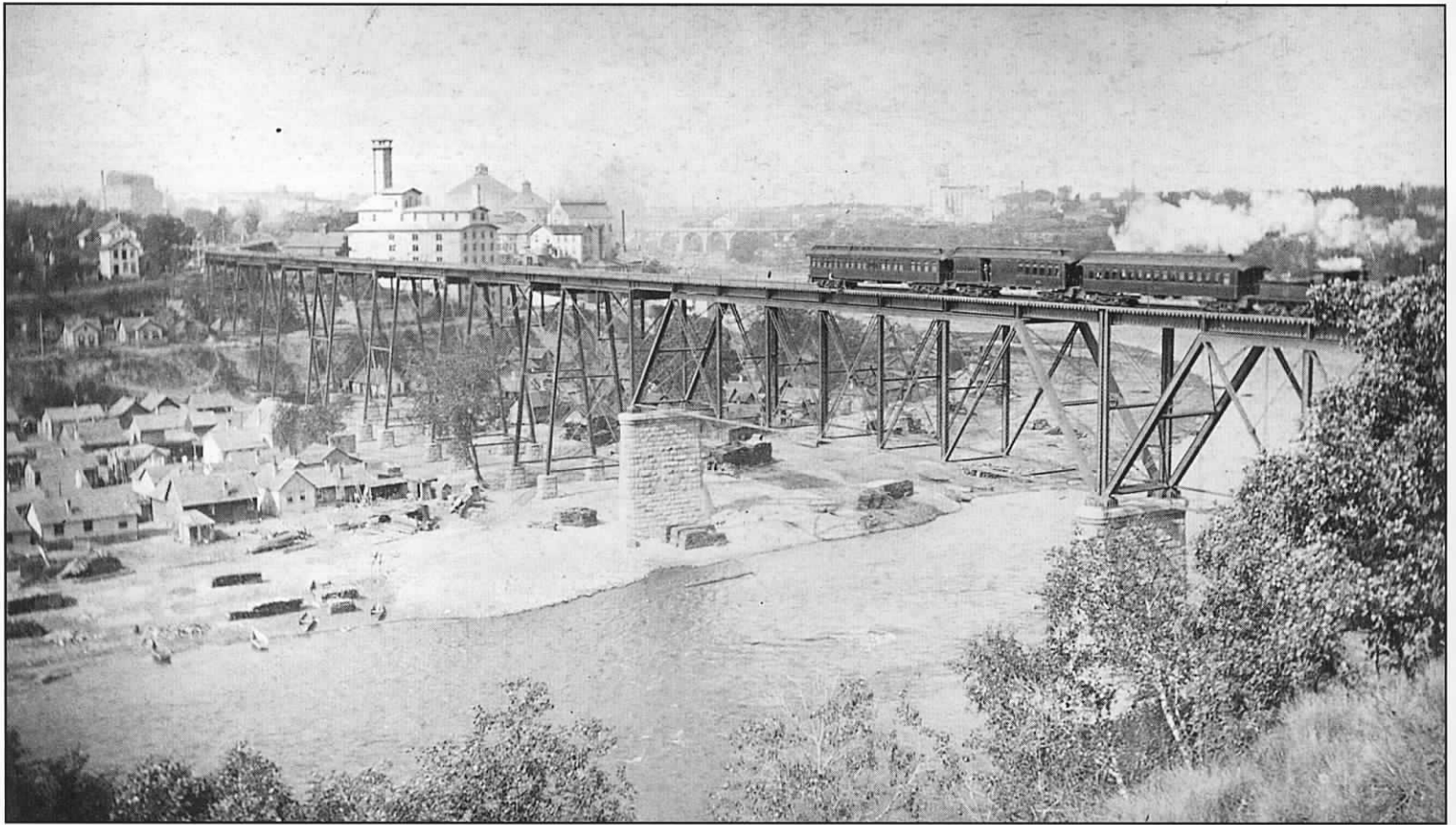
In 1927 this Duluth streetcar was dressed up for the first year of the Winter Frolic festival. Both Dick Stoner collection.

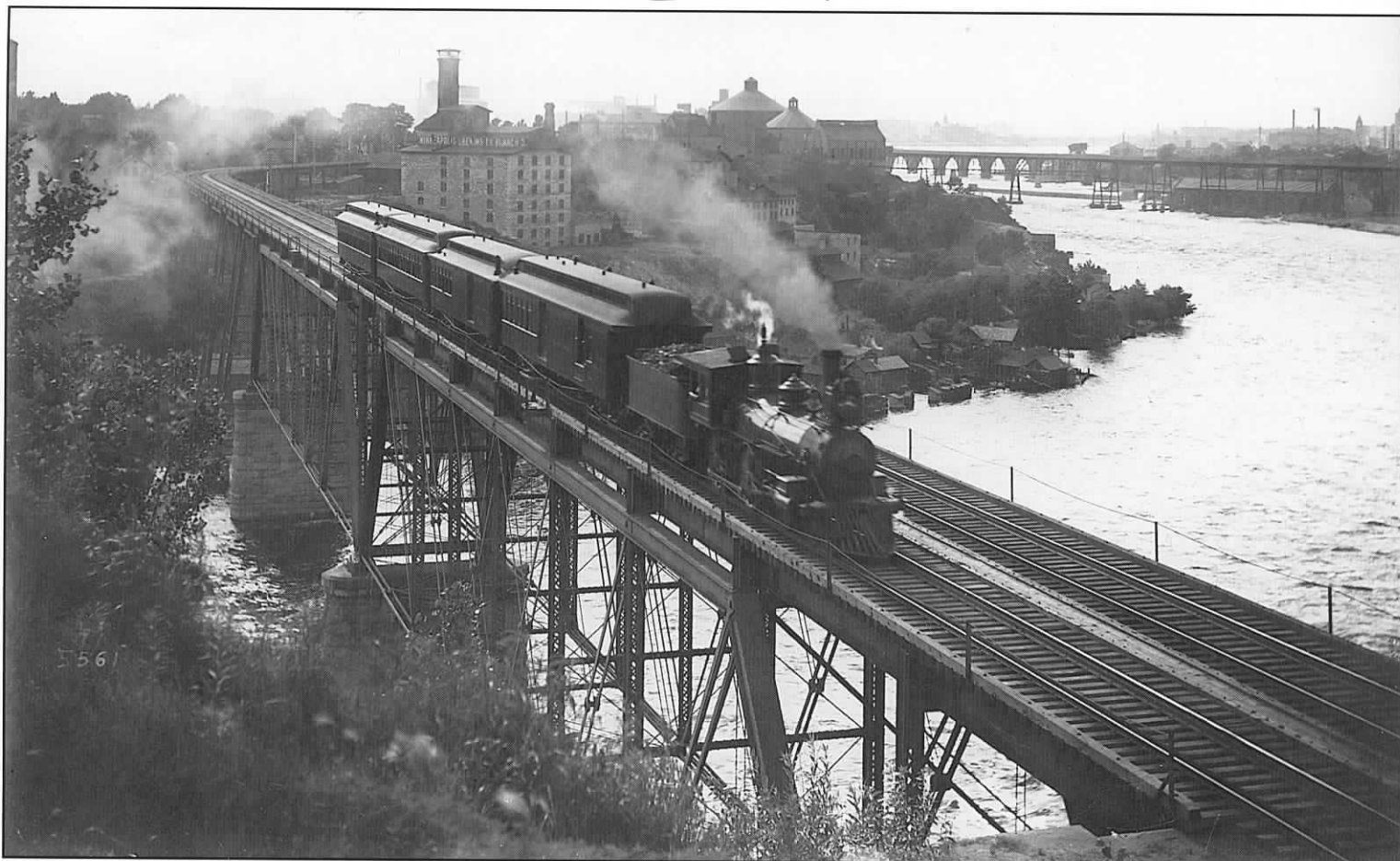


RAILROADS THRU THE U

As originally built, the Northern Pacific's main line between Minneapolis and St. Paul passed through the heart of the University of Minnesota's campus. It was located in a cut directly between the present day sites of Walter Library and Northrup Auditorium, and right through where Morrill Hall stands today. After World War I the University began construction of a series of new buildings clustered around the large green space known as the Mall. The railroad, with its noise and soot, would have to go.

The answer was a new bridge across the Mississippi River north of the old bridge. This would divert the NP into the same trench under Dinkytown occupied by the Great Northern. The move finally happened in 1923.





The original bridge over the Mississippi River was built in 1886. It soared over Bohemian Flats, the immigrant shanty town located on the west side of the river. Note the Stone Arch bridge in the distance. Minneapolis Public Library and Minnesota Historical Society collections.

Opposite bottom: Eastbound trains left the bridge and immediately entered the cut through the campus. This photo and the six that follow are from a pre-construction photo album from the University of Minnesota Archives collection. They show trains of the NP as well as the Minneapolis & St. Louis, which had trackage rights. This transfer run is passing under Pleasant Street. The Pharmacy Building, now Wulling Hall, is at right. University of Minnesota Archives collection.

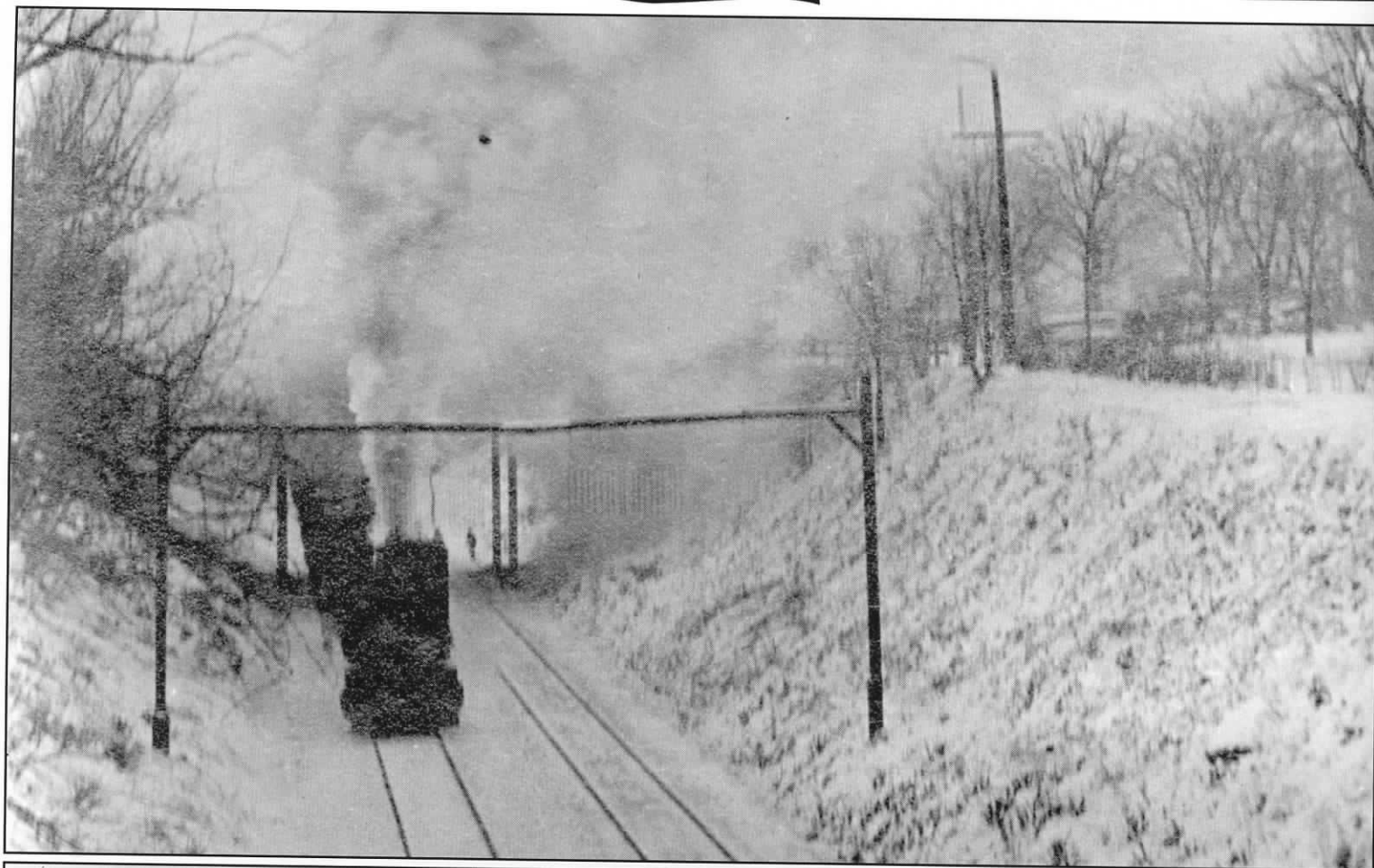
Below center: A block east of Pleasant was State Street, which no longer exists. At the north end of the dead end street, a pedestrian bridge crossed the railroad trench. This view looks east at two trains meeting. The lower right photo looks north across the footbridge at Nicholson Hall (at left) and Mechanical Engineering Foundry, since demolished and replaced by the Church Street underground garage.





A block east of the State Street pedestrian bridge, Church Street crossed the trench slightly to the east of its present alignment. This view looks west at it. East of Church Street sat Northrop Field. Its grandstand backed up to the north edge of the railroad trench. In the distance is the Harvard Street bridge.

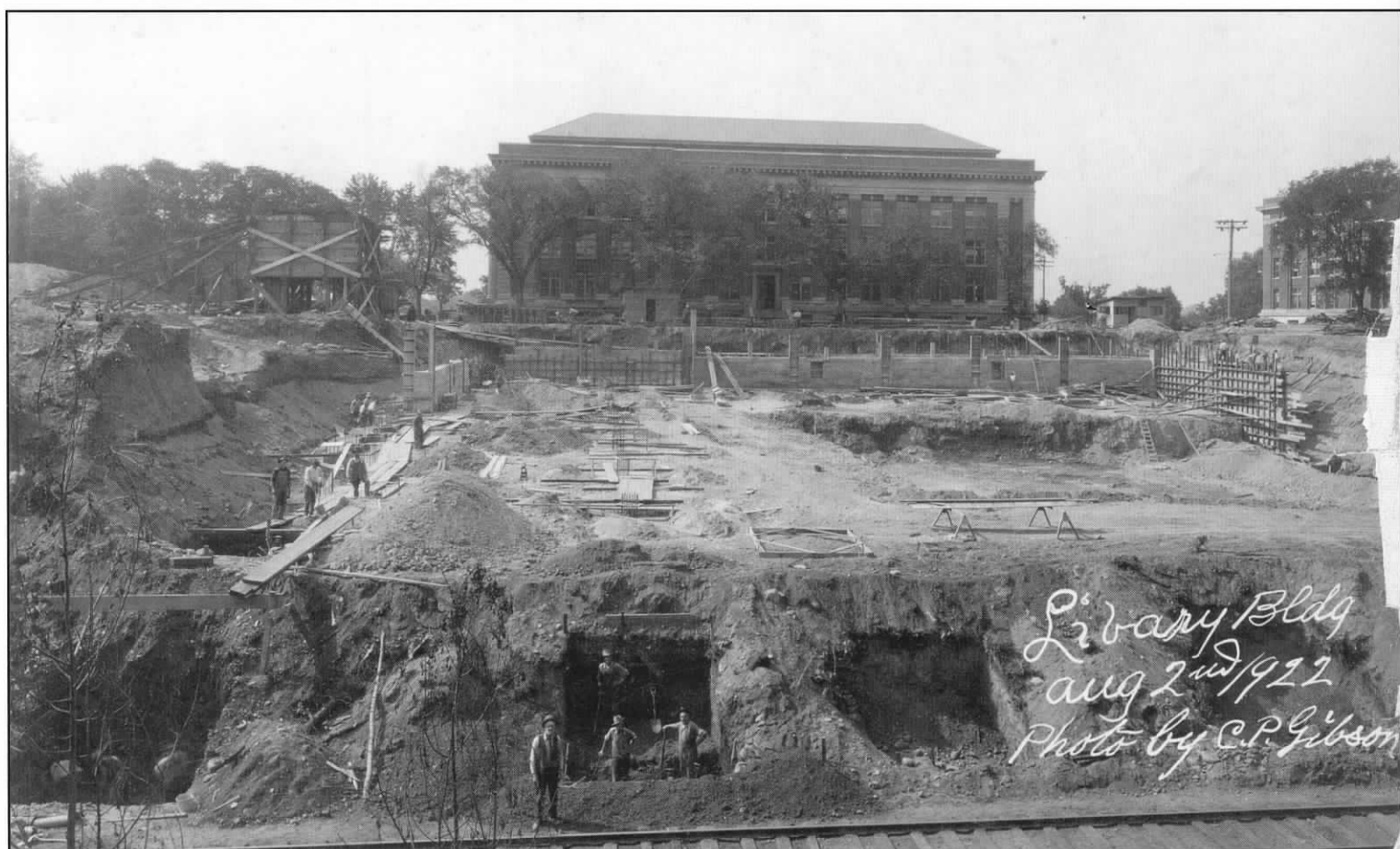




Emerging from the cut, the original line passed through the intersection of University Avenue (at right) and Oak Street (foreground). The Harvard Street bridge and grandstand are visible behind the locomotive. Minnesota Historical Society collection.



These two photos show the construction of Walter Library on the south edge of the trench. The top view looks west and the other looks south. University of Minnesota Archives collection.





Compare these before and after photos of the line relocation. At top is the original line through the campus, with the four bridges over the tracks visible. After the line change, it bends around the campus on the new bridge and via the Dinkytown trench. University of Minnesota Archives collection.





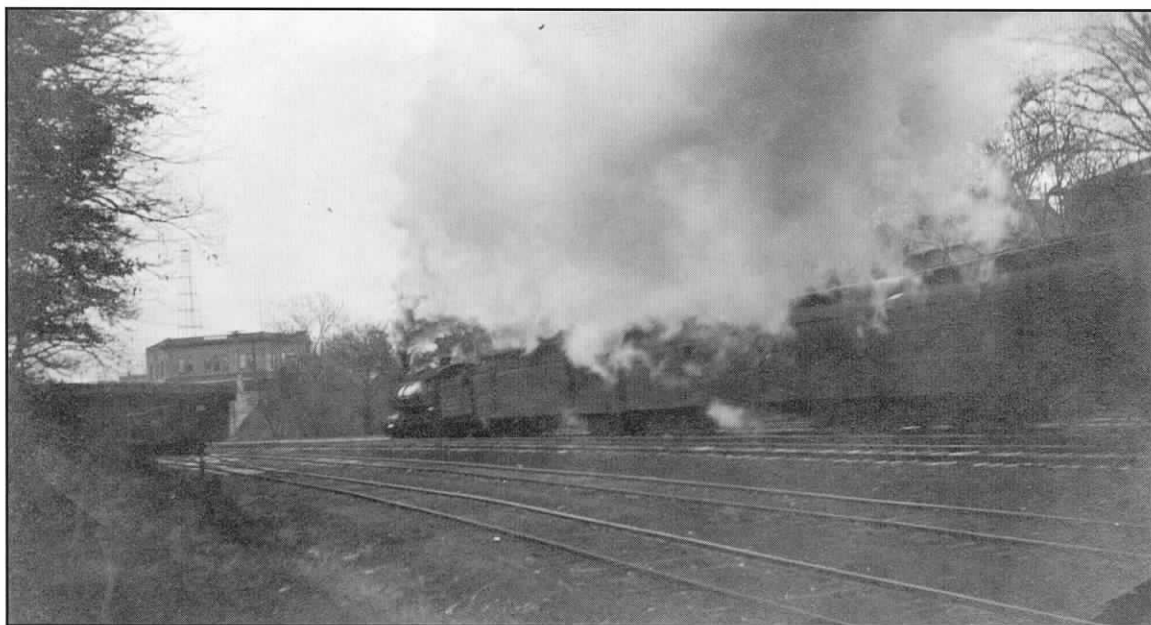
The Dinkytown trench opened into the southeast Minneapolis grain elevator district, viewed in the late 1950s. Note the Burlington's Afternoon Zephyr emerging from under the elevated intersection of 4th Street and 15th Avenue. In the bottom photo, from right to left are the Milwaukee Road, Northern Pacific, Chicago Great Western and Great Northern. At the upper left corner of the photo, the Great Northern's Stone Arch Bridge line meets the line from Minneapolis Junction. University of Minnesota Archives collection.





We're at the west end of the new bridge over the Mississippi. The M&STL's Northstar Limited to St. Louis approaches. The bottom photo shows detectives investigating a crime scene as a NP freight passes. Visible behind the bending man is the spur track that descended the bluff to the Minneapolis Municipal Barge Terminal. MTM and Minnesota Historical Society collections.





This is the Great Northern corridor leading into the Dinkytown trench. All three photos look east toward the University Avenue overpass. University of Minnesota Archives collection.





The Interurban between Minneapolis and St. Paul passed through the heart of the campus on Washington Avenue. This car is westbound crossing Church Street by the University Hospital. Minnesota Historical Society collection.
In 1940 a pair of Minneapolis-bound cars cross the Washington Avenue bridge over the Mississippi. University of Minnesota Archives collection.





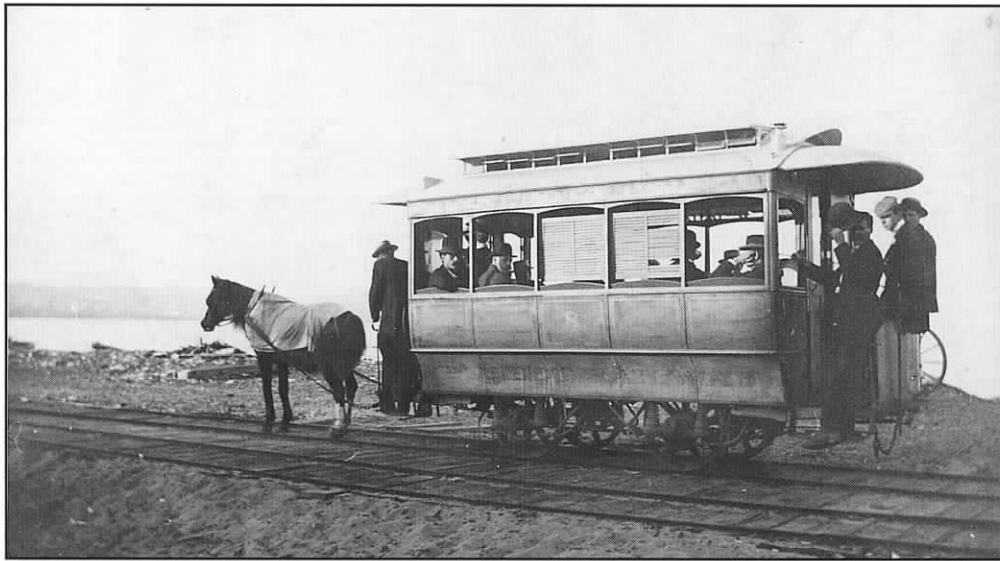
Something has attracted a Star-Tribune photographer on January 9, 1947. Certainly a PCC wouldn't be sitting on the bridge with its door open. Minnesota Historical Society collection.

The old bridge over the Mississippi was aligned slightly to the north of today double-deck bridge and gained the west bank via Old Washington Avenue, which led directly to Seven Corners. Art Rusterholz photo, MSM collection.



PARK POINT

Of the handful of small independent companies later absorbed by Duluth-Superior Traction, the one that remained on its own the longest ran on Park Point, the long, narrow sand bar that separated Lake Superior from the Duluth harbor. As the Minnesota Point Street Railway, it ran horsecars (except during the winter) from 1889 to 1897. The Interstate Traction Company took over the operation in the spring of 1898 and set out to electrify what was by then the last horsecar line in Minnesota. The first electrics ran in June 1899. The outer end of the line was always at Oatka Beach. In 1906 the beach became more of a destination with the opening of the "White City" amusement park. Not a success, it lasted only until 1909, when all the buildings were demolished except the dance hall. Only one or two blocks wide, every part of Minnesota Point was close to the streetcar, which led to its one-of-a-kind streetcar fire engine. In 1913 the company was reorganized as Park Point Traction. Duluth-Superior Traction bought it in 1917. With the completion of the aerial lift bridge in 1930, through service to downtown began. The Park Point line lasted only until 1931.

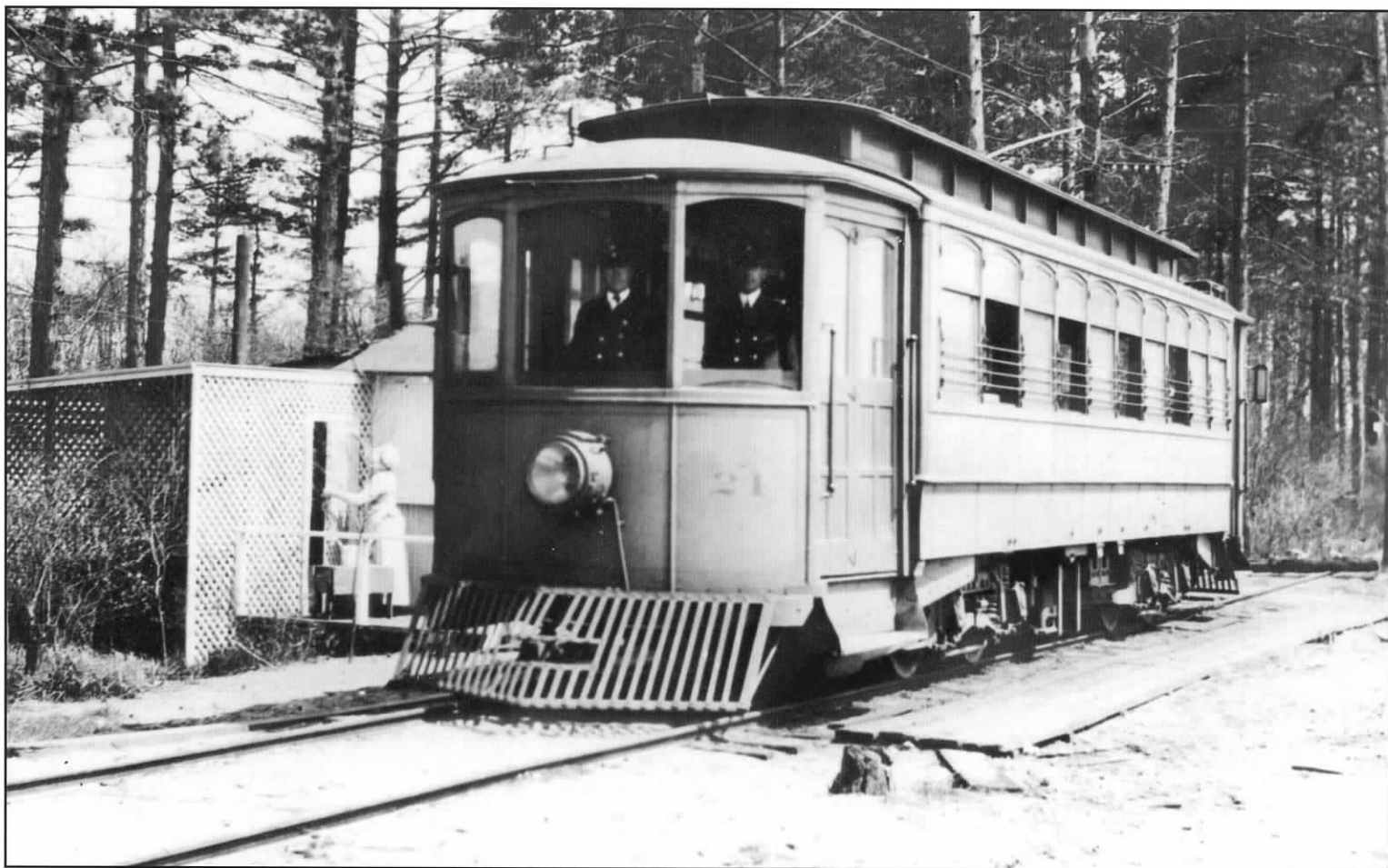


Horsecars ran longer on Park Point than anywhere else in the state, finally giving way to electrification in 1899. North East Minnesota Historical Center collection



Park Point's famous fire streetcar. MSM collection.

W.T.C.



Car #21 at Oatka Beach, the outer end of the line. MSM collection.

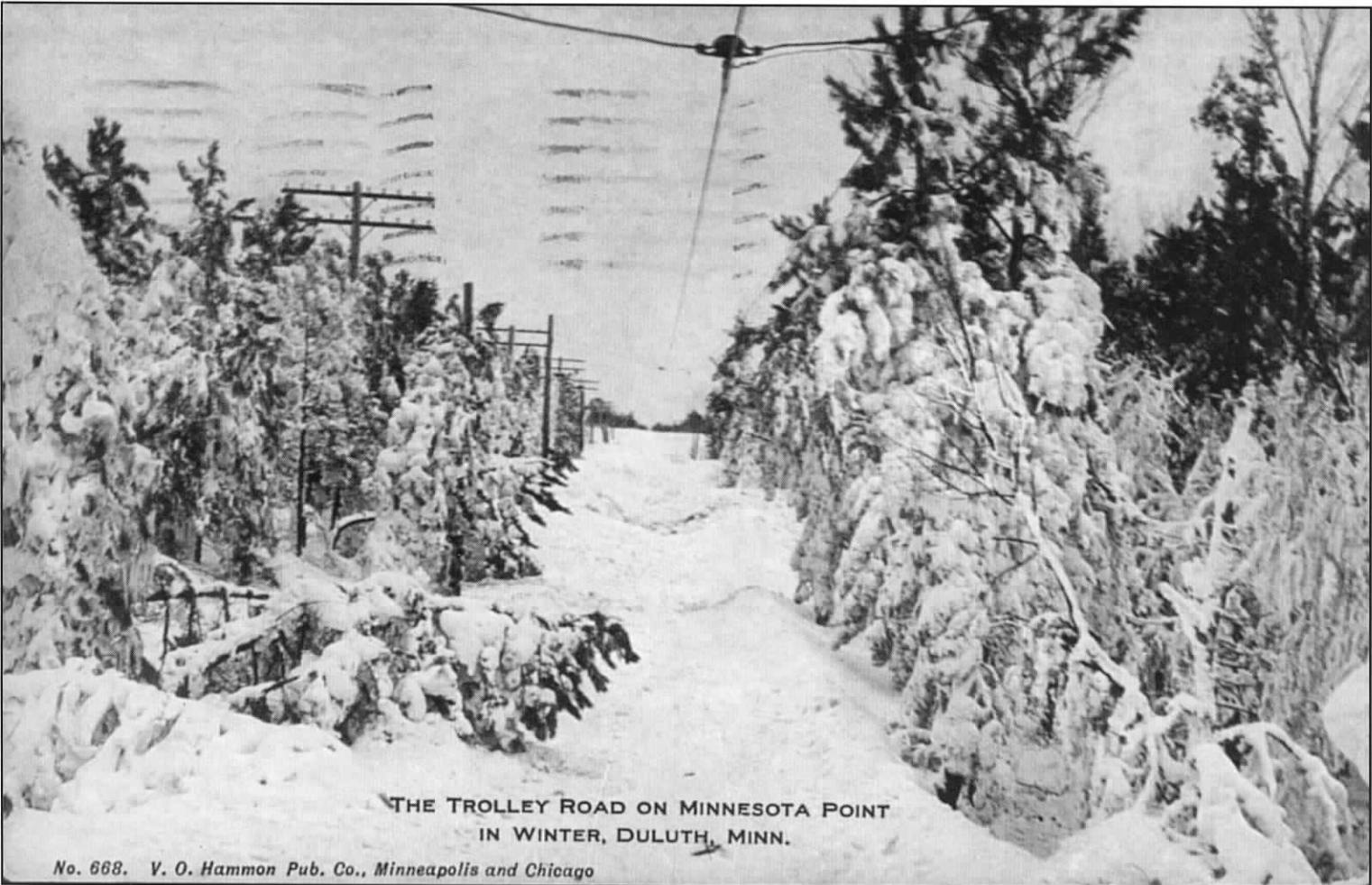
Below: The Park Point carhouse. MSM collection.

Opposite page: Summer and winter on the Point. The upper photo shows the 1899 transition from 3 foot 6 inch horsecars to standard gauge electric cars. Rather than the usual fix of moving one rail, the company built an entirely new track. Pete Bonesteel collection.



17388

Park Point, Duluth, Minn.



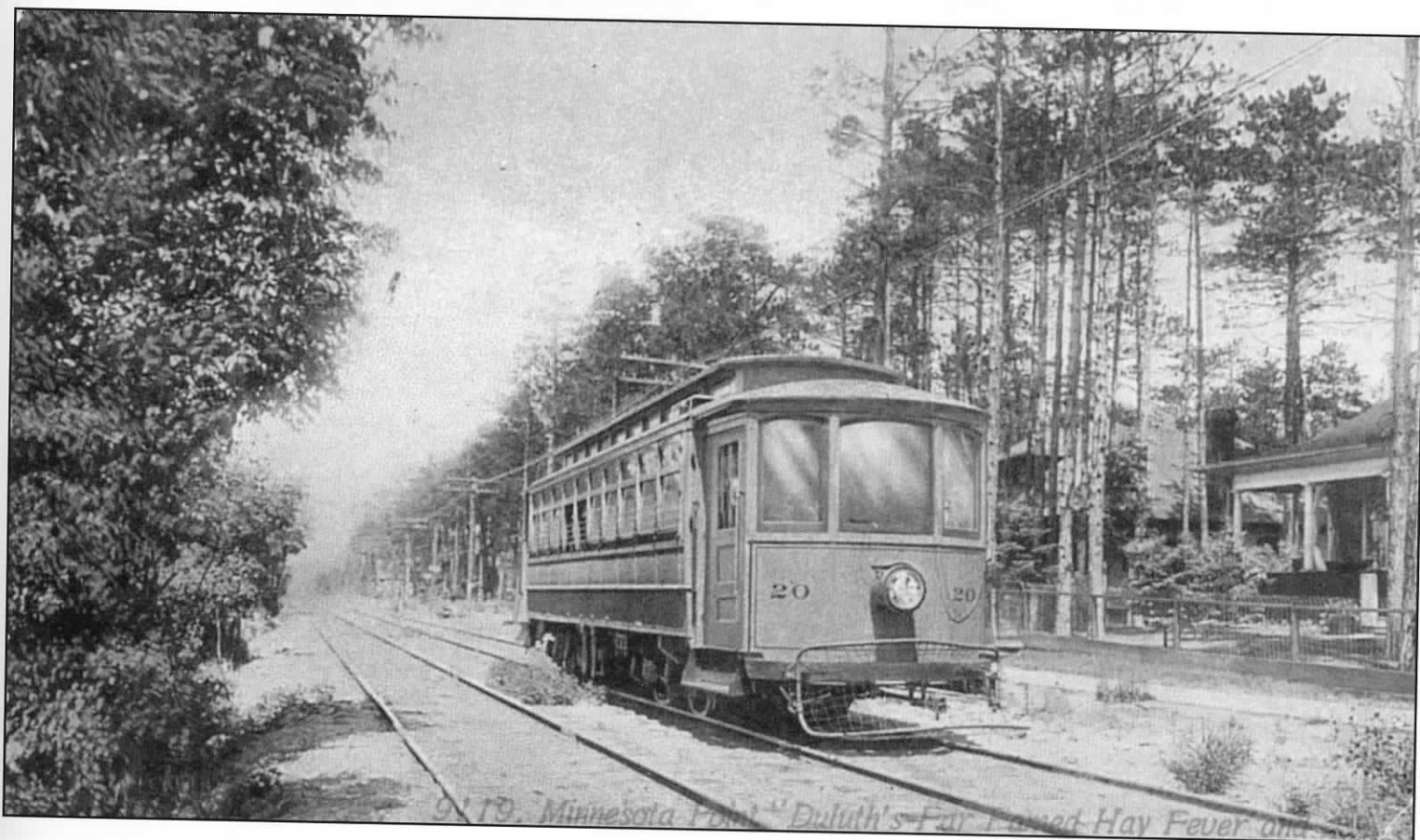
THE TROLLEY ROAD ON MINNESOTA POINT
IN WINTER, DULUTH, MINN.

No. 668. V. O. Hammon Pub. Co., Minneapolis and Chicago

Duluth, Minnesota. Minnesota Point, White City



The White City amusement park at Oatka Beach lasted only from 1906 to 1909. Pete Bonesteel collection. In 1911 the Interstate Traction Company purchased cars 20 and 21 from Danville Car Company. They were eventually folded into the Duluth roster, renumbered 287-288, and lasted until 1931. Pete Bonesteel collection.



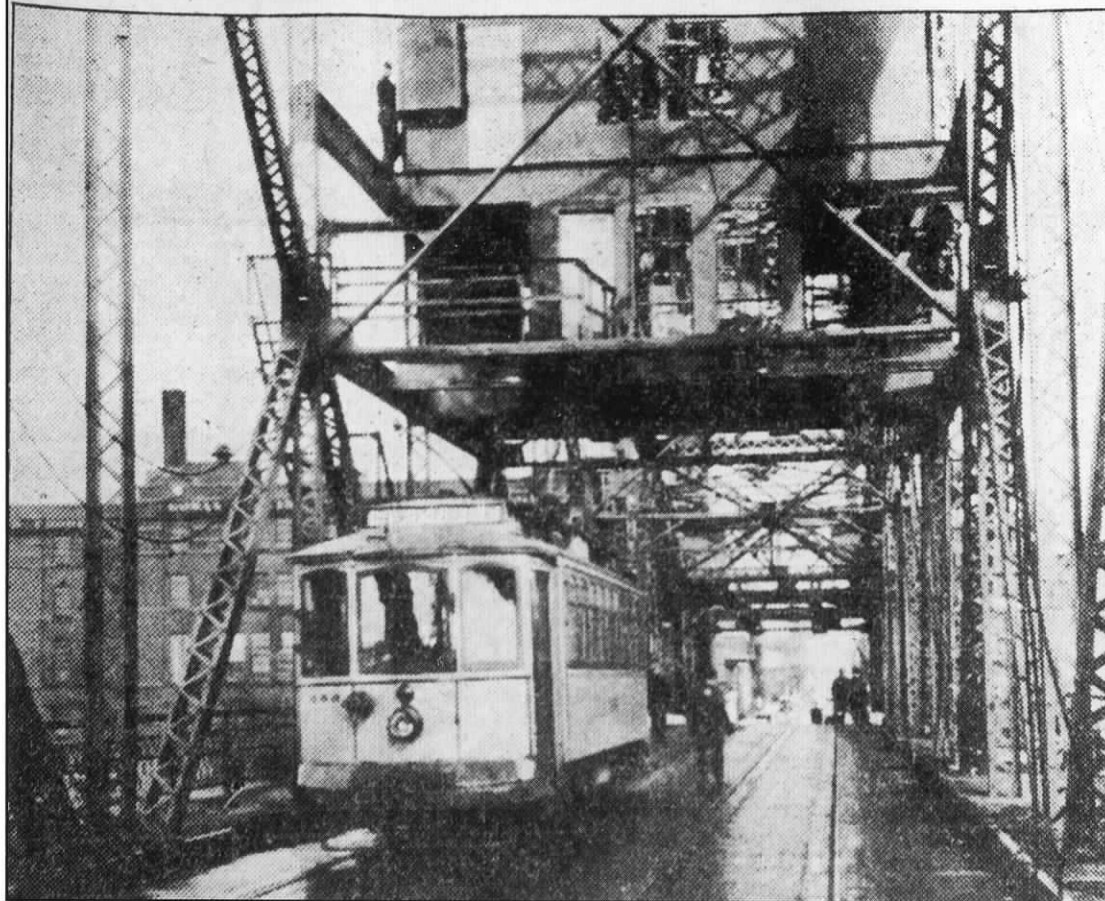


Cars #10-11 came from St. Louis Car Co. in 1905, and were renumbered 285-286 in the DSR fleet. #286 deals with typical winter conditions on the Point. MSM collection.

To reach the point, passengers first had to cross the ship canal that connected Lake Superior with the Duluth Harbor. Until 1930, when the aerial lift bridge was built, the Park Point line was physically isolated from the rest of the system. That is the case in this 1921 photo. One of the double-ended single truck Birneys (#298-300) that were regularly assigned to the line lays over at the ship canal, waiting for passengers to walk off the traveling car of the original aerial bridge. North East Minnesota Historical Center collection.



Duluth Herald 3-12-30
Street Car Traffic Starts Across Bridge



The locomotives pulling the Soo Line's Laker changed colors schemes between the late 1950s and early 1960s, when these views were taken. The Superior depot survives as a private business, and the Editor has heard that the large illuminated Soo Line sign has returned to the roof. Wayne C. Olsen photos, Dick Stoner collection.

March 12, 1930 finally saw through service to Duluth over the rebuilt aerial lift bridge. MSM collection.

Buses took over in 1931. MSM collection.

Rear cover: In 1948, Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range the train from Tower, Ely and Two Harbors crosses the trestle at the east end of the Lakeside siding on the far east end of Duluth. This track is now the North Shore Scenic Railroad. Wayne C. Olsen, photo, Dick Stoner collection.









MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

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August 2021

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